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FALL 2008 • NUMBER 6



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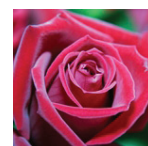
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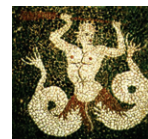
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- 6 EASY, BREEZY
- 8 YES WE KENYA
- 10 ON THE GO-GO
- 11 BELGE-YUM
- 14 A TINFOIL WRAPPER
- 16 BEATS DEETS
- 18 OH MAN, OMAR
- 22 HOT LICKS
- 26 GET IT NOW

ON THE COVER, PAGE 4 AND PAGE 6: ROAD WARRIORS
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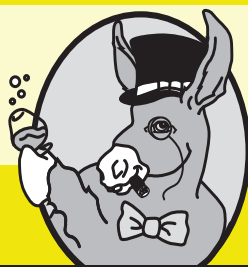
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SILA AND THE AFROFUNK EXPERIENCE GETS DOWN

"If James Brown grew up in Africa, he'd sound like us," is how Victor Sila, the Kenya-born vocalist of Sila and the Afrofunk Experience, describes his band. The 10-member sonic explosion, including talking drum and djembe players, gives a slightly different spin to the Godfather of Soul's trademark jittery gyrations, calling up the ghost of Afrobeat icon Fela Kuti to join the mix. But don't pigeonhole Sila's often political grooves: "Afrofunk isn't just Afrobeat and funk — it's a fusion that also contains Ghanaian highlife, Congolese soukous, Zairean zouk, reggae, and even rock." Rock, especially, will come to the fore on the live sensation's new, yet-to-be-titled album — the follow-up to the hip-popping *Funkiest Man in Africa* (Vasila, 2006) — coming out in December.

You can catch the wonder that is Sila and the Afrofunk Experience's live musical journey Oct. 10 at the Independent (www.independentsf.com) in a special tribute to Fela Kuti, which includes DJ Jeremiah and the Afrobeat Nation. Check out www.victorsila.com for more.

SFBG *Live music seems to be taking over the dance floors lately — even cutting-edge DJs have added live elements to their sets. How do you translate the amazing energy and danceability of your performances to your recordings?*

SILA It's true that the band is in the energy exchange business. We give it and we get it back in droves. So we had to figure out how to record our upcoming album without the crowds. We decided to record the whole band live and I'm extremely happy with the results. I just closed my eyes and reflected on the angst of being an African immigrant, the war in Iraq, genocide in Sudan, the corruption and political strife in my country Kenya, getting my heart broken the *nth* time.... You can feel it in the music.

SFBG *You came to America with the intention of becoming an R&B singer.*

SILA All young musicians in Kenya want to be Michael Jackson and Babyface. I submitted my music to labels here, but my Kenyan accent was too much for them. Couldn't hide the fact that I was from Africa. I got rejected. I moved to San Francisco and saw Baaba Maal at the Fillmore — and decided that I have totally abandoned my culture and was trying hard not to be African. So I started a new band and found some cats that have been playing in the scene for a while who knew their shit. I am blessed to have some of the most talented musicians in the Bay Area playing with me.

SFBG *Many new indie bands are adopting or foregrounding elements of the Afrobeat sound to great popular dance floor success. I'm thinking of Vampire Weekend, Foals, Dirty Projectors, Yeasayer ...*

SILA Fuck them. If people want to hear the real, authentic shit, take a trip to Africa or a bus to Amoeba records and get some education from these artists: Kanda Bongo Man, 4 Etoiles, Boubacar Traore, Sam Mangwana, Oliver Mtukudzi, and Baaba Maal. **SFBG**

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Belgian head

The tiny country's beers make it big

BY MOLLY FREEDENBERG
PHOTOS BY RORY McNAMARA

My relationship with microbrews started early. Right around the time I got my first fake ID, my local liquor stores started carrying exotic, sophisticated alternatives to Bud Light and Miller Genuine Draft. Full Sail! Sierra Nevada! Newcastle! Who knew beer could be dark and complex, spicy and dry, or packaged in a 22-ounce bottle? (In those days, 12- or 40-ouncers were the only options. We also walked to school barefoot, uphill both ways, in the snow.) Almost overnight, I learned to distinguish between porters and lagers, pale ales and hefeweizens.

It wasn't long before I stumbled upon my first Belgian beer: Lindeman's Framboise Lambic, sweet as raspberry juice and hearty as Guinness. I loved the taste, but I was even more enchanted with the story my know-it-all college roommate told: that this beer could only be made in one particular cave in Belgium, explaining both its distinctive taste and its high price tag.

It turns out my roommate's fanciful story was partly bullshit, but its essence was true. There's something special about Belgian beers — a combination of spice, place, history, and

process — that is impossible to duplicate anywhere else. The framboise lambic I tasted in those days may not have come from one cave, but it most certainly was the product of special wild yeasts allowed to ferment in a nonsterile environment inside a barrel that had been used (thereby acquiring bacteria unique to its location) for centuries. Could you import the ingredients and make a similar product elsewhere? Sure. Would it be identical? Thanks to microclimates and different standards for brewing and technology, the answer is almost certainly no.

All these factors, plus Belgium's historical dedication to the craft of artisanal beer, make brews from this region particularly distinctive — and also the Bay Area's favorite new trend in craft brewing.

Now it seems you can get Belgian beers almost anywhere (and, of course, even Budweiser is owned by Belgians now). You can order a Chimay at **Revolution Café** (3248 22nd St., SF. 415-642-0474, www.myspace.com/revcafe2006), **Amnesia** (853 Valencia, SF. 415-970-0012, www. CONTINUES ON PAGE 12 »

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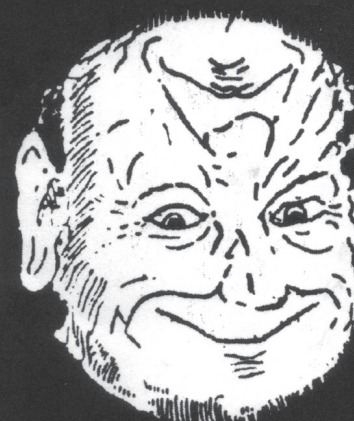
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But the trend has hit enough of a tipping point that certain bars and restaurants are focusing even more intensely on brews from France's hat. **The Monk's Kettle** (3141 16th St., SF. 415-865-9523, www.monkskettle.com), the refreshingly upscale yet unpretentious new addition to the Mission's 16th Street corridor, offers 15 styles of Belgian ales, most of which are unavailable in other Bay Area bars (along with a surprisingly satisfying and fresh bar menu). **La Trappe** (800 Greenwich, SF. 415-440-8727, www.latrappe-cafe.com), with its café upstairs and beer cave downstairs, offers more than 100 varieties of Belgian beers. The East Bay's buzz is over **The Trappist** (460 Eighth St., Oakl. 510-238-8900, www.thetrappist.com), which has such a great selection and helpful staff that there are already complaints it's too small.

An even more casual option is the **City Beer Store & Tasting Bar** (1168 Folsom, SF. 415-503-1033, www.citybeerstore.com) on Folsom, where the after-work crowd gather to take bottles home or, for a \$1 corkage fee, taste brews at one of the small café tables or the mini bar. For strictly take-home varieties, also try **Healthy Spirits**

(2299 15th St., SF. 415-255-0610, healthy-spirits.blogspot.com) in the Castro.

New to Belgians? Or simply ready to move beyond the Stella-Chimay-Delerium trinity? Nat Cutler of Monk's Kettle's gives his recommendations:

If you like lighter American beers like PBR, Cutler suggests trying a White Beer, the Belgian version of a hefeweizen. Citrus characteristics, a bit of spice, and low alcohol levels make this an easy drinking beer. Try: La Grande Blanche, Blanche de Namur or Watou's Wit.

If you like the flavor and high alcohol content of red Chimay, take a chance on a pale ale style like De Ranke's XX Bitter or Poperings Hommelbier. Blue Chimay drinkers might prefer a strong dark ale like Trappistes Rochefort 8 or Gulden Draak. And fans of the elusive white Chimay might want to try a tripel style, such as La Fin du Monde or Westmalle Trappist Tripel.

Wine cooler, cider, and margarita lovers might lean toward the sweeter fruit-infused lambics. Many already are familiar with Lindemans or Saint-Louis raspberry and peach varieties, but the adventurous might also like offerings from Mort Subite, Belle-Vue, or Cantillon.

If you really want to go out on a limb, try some of Cutler's favorites. He recommends Flanders Red, a sour, fruit-infused reddish ale that's often described the most "winelike" of beers. Try Brouwerij Verhaeghe or Rodenbach Grand Cru. Another option is a dry, cidery Gueuze, made from a mixture of old and young lambics. Try varieties from Frank Boon and Cantillon. **SFBG**



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FRIDAY, SEPT. 19

Miss Kittin and The Hacker

It'll be absolutely bananas when fierce attitude queen Miss Kittin (we mean that nicely!) and partner The Hacker take over the intimate-yet-perfect 103 Harriet. Patent leather pop-techno with a buzz-saw edge and vocoder sexiness will all be on tap, as well as a few sweaty bangers thrown in for good measure. With one of the best DJs SF has right now in support, Blasthaus resident Nikola Baytala.

9 p.m., \$20 advance

103 Harriet, SF

www.blasthaus.com

Shadowplay Reunion

The bang-up homofriendly indie, electro, new wave, no wave, disco-punk, post-punk, glam, etc., etc. club — if you're ever bored at Pride, head to the Shadowplay stage for some actual dance action — celebrates six-and-a-half years as the original dark dance party, because why stick to whole numbers? It's the Shadowplay way. With DJs Donimo, Six, and Candy, sweet, sweet, Candy.

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SATURDAY, SEPT. 20

Delhi 2 Dublin

Sari-licious monthly NonStop Bhangra teams its amazing dance and DJ troupe (Jimmy Love and RavE., plus Mandeep Sethi and Collage on the mics) with intriguing live act Delhi 2 Dublin, which blends Celtic and Bhangra sounds for an unforgettable and wonderfully disorienting experience. We call it "Bollyblin," or perhaps "Dubjabi."

9 p.m.-2 a.m. (bhanga lesson at 9:30 p.m.); \$15 advance, \$20 door

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nonstopbhanga.blogspot.com

www.delhi2dublin.com

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

Steve Massive

Blipswitch.net is an awesome new social Web site thingie for Bay Area techno-lovers (we've attended many an illicit gathering on its advice), and now it's launched a regular Tuesday weekly at the too-cute 222 Club — fronting some of the most-wanted knob-twiddlers from around the globe and called, appropriately, 222uesdays. Up this week will be Switzerland's master of nonstop pounding, Steve Master, in a two-hour tag-team set with Blipswitch



PRESETS



MATTHEW DEAR



DELHI 2 DUBLIN

resident Leon, and supported by local smoothie DJ Javaight (JV8) for a night of pure adrenalin, Swiss-style. 7 p.m.–2 a.m.; \$5 early, \$8 late 222 Club 222 Hyde, SF (415) 440-0222 www.blipswitch.net

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27

Brazilian Girls

Is there nothing Americans can't do? Except when it comes to politics? As soon as South America began to make some serious marks on the electro world, along came this trio of New Yorkers with their outré performance, stomp-along-till-you-weep tunes, a touch of tango, and southern-hemispheric moniker. Paint you face, fashion an outfit out of Glad bags, and win! With psychedelic torchers the Submarines. 8 p.m., \$25 advance 444 Jessie, SF. (415) 820-9669 www.mezzaninesf.com

SUNDAY, SEPT. 28

Folsom Street Fair

Forget Sarah Palin, the real dominatrices — and masters, and slaves, and pigs — will be roaming the streets by the hundreds of thousands at this gonzo fetish tradition. But what about the entertainment? Is it all gonna be some awful circuit shit? Hell, no — there's plenty for dance connoisseurs to take in, including the Presets, English Beat, Shiny Toy Guns, and — what? love it — Berlin featuring Terri Nunn. Just remember to oil your leather panties; sweat will kill

those mothers. 11 a.m.–6 p.m., donation requested Folsom between Seventh and 12th streets www.folsomstreetfair.com

SATURDAY, OCT. 4

SF LoveFest

It's that time again, time for the biggest outdoor DIY clusterfuck of the year for local dance maniacs. The floats, sponsored by clubs, labels, and DJs, will parade down Market and then gather in the Civic Center for an all-day extravaganza. And although there will be big name headliners — Benny Benassi, Cut Copy, Armin Van Buuren — there's oodles of fab native talent to cheer about, including Audio Angel, Kaskade, Claude Von Stroke, and oh so many more. Dust off your glow sticks, children. Noon — late, donation requested Civic Center Plaza, SF. (Parade starts at noon at Second and Market streets) www.sflovefest.org

FRIDAY, OCT. 10

Matthew Dear's Big Hands

The Texas-born darling with a Detroit fixation and a wiggly new album, Asa Breed, brings his latest project — a (gasp!) three-member live band — to Mighty. Yes, Dear will sing. Acid house meets acid rock? Maybe, but the underground kids will be out in full force to support and query. With atmospheric up-and-comers Telefon Tel Aviv. 9 p.m. — late, \$15 advance 119 Utah, SF. (415) 626-7001 www.mighty119.com

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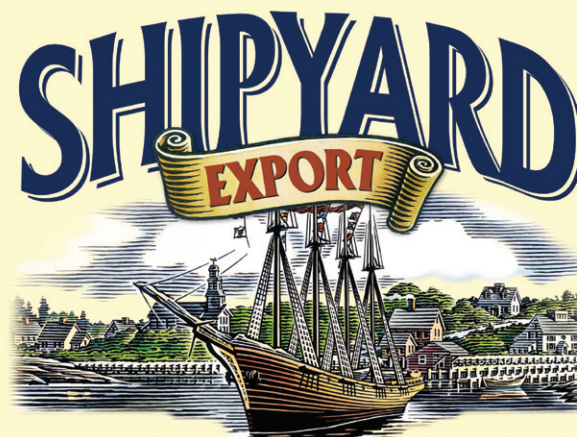
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DJ OMAR CROSSES THE LINE

You know those incredible people who seem to be everywhere, forever? DJ Omar is one of those. The darling of insanely popular, indie-leaning weekly Popszene at 330 Ritch, which he launched more than a decade ago with Live 105's Aaron Axelson, Omar hardly has enough fingers for all of his pies. Besides running Popszene (www.popszene-sf.com), which books some of the most up-to-the-minute underground bands on the planet, he also recently opened for Yaz and Hercules and Love Affair, threw a bang-up shindig for the lovely Italians Do It Better label, and is involved with a slew of parties, including Leisure at Annie's Social Club (www.anniessocialclub.com), Concrete Jungle at the Knockout (www.theknockoutsf.com), Shutter at Elbo Room (www.elbo.com), and Suspiria at Harlot (www.harlotsf.com). Soon he'll launch another project called, titillatingly, Full Frontal Disco.

Omar's been tagged as the reigning king of indie dance and is often associated with Brit pop. Yet he's oh so much more. "I prefer to play around with a variety of styles and stay out of genre lines," he says. "If it sounds good, and I'm dextrous enough to mix it, I'll play it. I think this sundry approach resonates with certain people whose tastes may be equally as broad." You can check out more of Omar at www.myspace.com/club-mouthwash.

SFBG *Your style mixes retro sounds with up-to-the-minute tracks, yet it still seems so smooth — and unclassifiable. It also somehow goes beyond the whole lazy iPod DJ thing.*

OMAR I grew up in Washington, DC listening to a steady diet of go-go, New Wave, Chicago house, and Fugazi. That was the springboard for the eclectic slant I bring to mixing records today. I also think that's why I'm able to remain a career DJ in San Francisco — I'm not above any genre. I'm open to it all and I'm a passionate record nerd.

SFBG *You've been promoting, booking, and spinning in SF for more than a decade now, and your big club, Popszene, is 18-and-over. I'm in no way calling you old here, but the kids are getting younger all the time, no? Do you find that they're not as receptive to some of the more retro tracks you play?*

OMAR The kids have always been the same age. I was sneaking into Red Zone in New York and Tracks in DC when I was 15 and the multivariate approach those DJs took back then made a huge impact on me and, in turn, the excitement and energy from kids like myself inspired them. I think it's the same now, I'm just on the other side of the DJ booth.

SFBG *What are your top records right now?*

OMAR I currently love "Veronica's Veil" by Fan Death, "The Visionary" by Casionova, "Voulez Vous" by Abba, Motörhead's *Motorizer*, "Homocompatible" by Discodaine, and the *After Dark* triple LP from Italians Do It Better.

SFBG *Any thoughts on the future of your scene?*

OMAR I hope that I don't have a scene. By that I mean, I hope that the people coming to my parties continue to have fun, dance to music they love, and get turned on to something unexpected without too many social restrictions. Also, Italo Disco and Heavy Metal will finally unite and become Metal-Disco. **SFBG**

PHOTO: PAT MAZZERA
INTERVIEW: MARKE B.
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REMY MARTIN 1989

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www.remy.com

PISCO 100

Pisco is a Peruvian or Chilean grape brandy that's popping up on

cocktail menus all over town in the form of pisco sours and pisco punches. Pisco 100 is a new-to-market premium brand that is so fresh, citrusy, and fantastic you can drink it mixed or sip it on its own.
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Imported Italian liqueur DIMMI was until recently called Veloce. The flavor hasn't changed with the name though — it's sort of an herbal amaro, sort of a floral infusion, and sort of a sweet grappa. And it's all sorts of delicious.
www.dimmispirits.com

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Ocho is a tequila brand born to feature single-estate agave, with each bottle labeled with the name of the estate and year of harvest. Next year's batch will probably taste different, as agave can't be

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www.tequilaocho.com

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Pernod, the pastis, used to be Pernod, the absinthe, until it was banned in Europe. Now the original (or rather, the “inspired by the original”) recipe is back, and it is one of the tastier absinthes to hit the market since the US ban was recently lifted.
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Camper English is a local writer who knows more about alcohol than should be humanly possible. Check out his super-informative hiccups at www.alcademics.com.

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David: Jacket by Heaten from Five and Diamond, Happy Mad jeans from Villains, police boots from Stompers, T-shirt from Thriving Ink

Evie: Jacket by Heaten from Five and Diamond, vintage jumper and hand-warmers from Venus Superstar, Jeffrey Campbell boots from Shoe Biz

SILA AND THE AFROFUNK EXPERIENCE PAGE 8

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DEVIL IN THE CENTERFOLD PAGES 14-15

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